



# LINCOLN CHAFEE

## U.S. SENATOR

### RHODE ISLAND

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT: Stephen Hourahan**  
**202-224-6167**

### **CHAFEE INTRODUCES BILL TO STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSES OF BREAST CANCER**

WASHINGTON, DC -- U.S. Senator Lincoln D. Chafee (R-RI) has introduced bipartisan legislation -- the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act (S. 757) -- to provide federal funding for research into the environmental causes of breast cancer, the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women. The legislation is co-sponsored by Senator Harry Reid (D-NV), Jim Talent (R-MO), Hillary Clinton (D-NY), and Orrin Hatch (R-UT).

The Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act would authorize the National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences to establish Centers of Excellence to study environmental risk factors. The bill would specifically authorize \$30 million in Fiscal Years 2006-2011 to provide grants to fund studies on environmental factors associated with breast cancer.

"For many years, scientists have researched the genetic variations that can lead to breast cancer, but the environmental causes have largely been ignored," Chafee commented. "The question we need to answer is: what environmental factors may trigger the onset of breast cancer. Once these are determined, we might one day be able to provide women with information about what environmental hazards they should avoid."

Chafee also noted the importance of congressional action. "The Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act will allow us to gather this important evidence before we come to conclusions; to wipe away myths and misconceptions; and to arm women with the scientific data they need to stay healthy and cancer-free. I hope our combined commitment will bring this bill to the forefront of women's health issues in Congress."

Excluding cancers of the skin, breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women in the United States and worldwide. Approximately 3 million women in the United States are living with breast cancer, 2 million of whom have been diagnosed and an estimated 1 million who do not yet know that they have the disease.

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In 2005, it is estimated that 269,730 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed among women in the United States, 211,240 cases of which will involve invasive breast cancer and 58,490 cases of which will involve ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS). Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death for women in the United States between the ages of 20 and 59. Approximately 40,410 women in the United States die from the disease each year.

Chafee noted that breast cancer is a particularly urgent issue for Rhode Island. According to Chafee, the American Cancer Society estimates that 780 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed this year in Rhode Island. Another 150 Rhode Island women will die of breast cancer this year.

Scientists have long recognized that environmental factors -- such as diet, pesticides, and electromagnetic fields -- play a significant role in determining who will contract breast cancer. Unfortunately, due to difficulties in correlating environmental factors with specific instances of breast cancer, this important area has remained underfunded and understudied. The Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act would provide the first congressionally mandated study of potential environmental risk factors of breast cancer.

In November 2004, the Avon Foundation honored Senator Chafee as a "Pink Ribbon Crusader," in recognition of his "exemplary support of the breast cancer cause."

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